THE MONGOLS.

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The Mongols belong to that vast family of nations which inhabits the eastern, central, and perhaps northern, divisions of Asia. But they are most intimately connected with the Tatars—so intimately, indeed, that it would often be difficult to distinguish the descriptions given by travellers of the two people, were it not for certain characteristics which the subject state of the one, and the independent condition of the other, have impressed upon them. Not many centuries ago, there appears to have existed so little difference between the Tatars and the Mongols, that their names became convertible terms. Carpin furnishes more than one example of this; and he expressly asserts that the Yeka, or Great Mongols—the Su-Mongols, commonly called Tatars—the Merkats, and the Metrits—resembled each other so much in form and language, that the only division he could perceive was into countries and provinces. Perhaps we ought to consider the word Tatar as a generic term, and apply it indifferently to all the inhabitants of Central Asia, including the Independent Tatars and the Mongols as the principal sub-divisions. The traditions of these people represent them as descendants of two brothers—according to some old travellers, Gog and Magog; and, indeed, if we base our views on the opinions of the tribes of Central Asia themselves, we must recognise them every one as closely related. Isbrants Ides informs us, that all with whom he had come in contact seemed anxious to assert their community of origin. It is well known, moreover, that the Turks are a branch from the same stock.

In the present paper, however, I intend to confine myself to the Mongols properly so called—that is to say, the descendants of the race which, under the banner of Genghis Khân and his immediate successors, overran and subdued the greater part of Asia, and the north-east of Europe. Accord-

ing to Rashíd-eddín, the name (which, used as an adjective, signifies "valorous," "courageous") was first bestowed on the numerous progeny of Alung-goa, mother of Budantzar, tenth ancestor of Genghis Khân, about the year 1000. It must have been afterwards applied by extension to the subjects of Budantzar; for at the birth of his illustrious descendant, the Mongols were already a powerful people. Subsequently, many tribes of kindred origin assumed the name, in order to claim relationship with the conquerors of the thirteenth century.

The *Ghers*, or felt-tents, of this pastoral people were originally pitched amidst the mountains and forests on the south-eastern banks of Lake Baikal, round the mouth of the Selinga, which, flowing from the very heart of Mongolia, seemed to tempt them upwards to the land which they afterwards occupied. They settled also in the islands of the lake; and Olkhon is still inhabited by their descendants (the Buriats), who possess fine herds of cattle, cultivate the ground, which they carefully irrigate by little runnels derived from their rare springs, hunt wolves, bears, and squirrels, and cross over to the southern shores of the lake to capture the seal. Previous to the promulgation of the Lamaic religion among the Mongols, the waters of Baikal, and the mountainous island I have mentioned, seem to have monopolised a considerable portion of the veneration of the people of this part of Central Asia. Olkhon was, and is indeed still by many, believed to be the habitation of a god invested with certain ill-defined attributes of terror; and the lake itself has been endowed with consciousness and a due sense of its own importance. It will not, it is said, submit to receive the contemptuous epithet of *Osera*, "sleeping or stagnant water," and stickles for the appellation of *Dalaï*, or "sea." By its very nature, however, it is precluded from avenging its dignity on those who insult it from the land; but woe to him who ventures to treat it ignominiously, whilst sailing or sliding over its surface! Tempests blow, waves rise, the ice cracks, and the ingratitude of the traveller is often punished with death! An adventurous Russian resolved once to try the temper of the liquid divinity, and,

when he had reached the centre, poured out a glass of brandy, in which he drank the health of the Christians of Europe, calling upon the lake, by the opprobrious epithet of *Oṣṣra*, to be his witness. The terrified natives every instant expected to hear the first howl of the hurricane, but the weather was more than ordinarily serene, and they urged their sledges hurriedly towards *terra firma*, wondering at the unusual forbearance of the insulted lake!

It was in such a situation, and in the midst of such superstitions, that the tribe of Mongols grew up, scarcely keeping pace with its neighbours in knowledge and civilisation, until the birth of the Great Temugin—by some, derived from a smith—by others, from an ancient family who introduced the use of forges into the country—by the Chinese, from the blue wolves and white goats, which they assert to be the ancestors of all the Mongols; but, as I have already observed, by Rashíd-eddín and other credible authorities, from Budantzar, son of Alung-goa. This is not the place to relate the exploits or estimate the character of that celebrated conqueror. I shall merely observe, that after spreading on every side with astonishing rapidity, massacring or enslaving surrounding nations, the Mongols beheld their brilliant but brief period of conquest fade away, and were once more confined to their steppes and plateaus, and reduced to live on their herds and a scanty agriculture. The establishments they made in foreign countries, if we except China and Hindústân, had none of the elements of duration. They could storm and sack fortified places, win pitched battles, build cities in the midst of wildernesses, but they could not, at least in most instances, conceive and execute any plan for keeping the fertile districts they overran in anything like lasting subjection. It remained for their brethren the Turks to perfect a system by which a barbarous tribe, such as they were, could establish a permanent sway over a civilised though effeminate empire.

The Mongols, however, were soon driven back from their splendid acquisitions; or, rather, as soon as fresh accessions to their forces ceased to flow from their original seat, they melted into the populations they had conquered, without in-

fluencing in any perceptible degree their form of government, their manners, or their religion. This last, indeed, the Mongols in most cases received from the conquered.

There are two periods in the history of Mongolia since the days of Genghis Khân: the first extends through the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries; the seventeenth was an age of transition; the second period continues to our own day.

During all this time there may be observed a gradual revolution in the manners and character of the Mongols, amply accounted for by the changes in their political condition and religious ideas. In the first place, we behold the imperfect civilisation they had attained to under Genghis Khân, rapidly giving way before the influences of their climate and the configuration of their soil. It was not of native growth, and never took firm root among them. They soon relapsed into their original barbarism, and split into tribes, the number of which constantly increased, whilst each claimed to be governed by a descendant of the Khân Temugin. Meanwhile, however, the Kootooktoo, the great Pontiff of Mongolia, gradually extended his influence with the increase of the Lamaic religion; so that, at the period of his voluntary submission to China, he was enabled to carry with him a great part of the whole population. At this very period it was calculated, by shrewd observers, that, had the Mongols known their own strength, they could once more have conquered, not only China, but the Manchûs themselves, with the greatest facility. Instead, however, of refusing to submit to the yoke, the greater number—I except, of course, the Sungarians, who made a bloody resistance—yielded without a murmur; whilst those who still asserted their independence, contented themselves with continuing their predatory incursions, both on the Siberians and Chinese, and assaulting the caravans that passed to and fro. Their attacks were conducted in a very peculiar manner. It was their custom to set fire to the grass round the camps, and endeavour to burn out the travellers. They were often, however, too timid or too weak to follow up their attempts, and their intended victims escaped with the loss of a tent or so, or perhaps of a camel or a horse; but tracts burnt up for the

space of two days' journey frequently exhibited the mischievous consequences of their proceeding.

Since this time China has gradually consolidated her power; and her manners, considerably modified it is true, have been adopted by the Mongols, who are now distinguished by gentleness and docility; whereas formerly they were ferocious, intractable, cruel, and insolent. Martini remarks that they are still subject to sudden outbursts of anger, in which case neither their father nor their mother is safe from their wrath; but in general it is acknowledged that their character is good. It is difficult to say, whether the beneficent precepts of the Lamaic religion, or the influence and laws of China, have had most share in the production of this marked change. At any rate, certain it is that all travellers unite in asserting the superiority of the character of the Mongols to that of their fellow-subjects within the wall, who are equally submissive, but far less kind and hospitable to strangers. This superiority is strikingly evinced by the gratitude which the pastoral people feel and express for the smallest present, whilst the rapacity of the Chinese is never satisfied, and is so intense that thankfulness for past favours is almost entirely swallowed up by cravings after new.

At the same time it must be remembered, that, in industry, the Mongols are extremely deficient, whilst in this the Chinese excel. The latter are averse from leaving a single foot of land uncultivated; whereas the former can scarcely prevail on themselves to sow a little millet, barley, and wheat. This has been accounted for by Timkowski in the following manner:—"The sterility of the steppes obliges the Mongols often to change their habitations. Always on the look out for pasture, they are frequently obliged to pass the summer in places very distant from their winter and spring encampments, and consequently to leave their cultivated fields for a long time." But natural idleness has much to do with their agricultural slovenliness. Even in those quarters, between Kiakhta and Urga, for example, where wood and pasturage abound, they neglect to prepare dwellings, or lay up provisions for the winter, contenting themselves with carelessly heaping up a few stacks of hay. Accordingly, when the snow

falls and the cold strengthens, their cattle are attacked by disease, and perish in incredible numbers. The Lamas, on the other hand, are active cultivators; and the church lands of Mongolia, instead of being, as in some of our colonies, impediments to civilisation, might, if the people possessed any of the necessary qualities, form nuclei for the successful exertion of agricultural industry.

The portrait of the Mongols has been painted with various colours. When they were objects of dread to the nations of the earth, words could scarcely be found to describe their hideousness; and the pictures left of them are rather those of devils than men. This prejudice has been imbibed by Bory de St Vincent, who says they are the most hideous of the human race, though he is of opinion that one of their branches, the Turks, became the most beautiful, by migrating into the balmy Ionia, Macedonia, and Greece, and by mixing with the Circassians and the descendants of the ancient Hellenes. It appears, however, that the reports of the ugliness of the Mongols have been greatly exagerated. Timkowski observes, that many of the women, with their clear complexions, cheerful countenances, and lively, animated eyes, would be esteemed handsome even in Europe; and the Baron de Bode assures me that he has seen Tatars who possessed great personal beauty.

From this, however, it must not be understood that I intend to break a lance in favour of the peerless charms of the Mongols, male or even female. What I mean is, that they are very far from possessing the diabolical assortment of features which has been attributed to them; and that their countenances do at least exhibit a capacity for beauty. Among the principal characteristic features are a slightly pointed head and chin, and high or rather wide cheek-bones. The bare knowledge of these facts, unaccompanied by personal experience, has induced some naturalists to compare the face of the Mongols to a lozenge; but that this resemblance is arbitrarily traced, will appear from the fact that Timkowski, who had seen thousands of specimens, expressly says that their face is round. Their temples are slightly hollow, and the upper maxillar is square, whilst the lower, on the contrary,

is somewhat pointed. Like the Chinese, too, the upper teeth of the Mongols project, so as to rest sometimes upon the lower lip, whilst the other range inclines rather inwards. This peculiarity of construction influences greatly the pronunciation of their language. But the most remarkable traits in the physiognomy of the Mongol, are the oblique position of the eyes, and the distance between them, by some exaggerated to more than the breadth of a man's hand. The former characteristic is common to the Chinese, whom I believe to be the first Tatars who came down from their plateaus to settle on the plain, being tempted by the fertility of the banks of the Hoang-ho. In later times the same impulse led to the frequent conquest of the country, and the transformation of successive tides of invaders into peaceful, and at length effeminate citizens. The Malays, also, have the inner corner of their eyes depressed, and the outer raised towards their temples; and Lesson observed the same peculiarity in some of the islanders of the Indian Archipelago.

Whilst on the subject of the eyes of the Mongols, I may observe that they are deep-set and lively,—" inconstant" is the expression of an old writer,—and that their iris is almost always black, though said to be blue by Bory de St Vincent. This incorrect writer asserts, moreover, that these people are furnished with an ample growth of beard, especially on the upper lip; whereas all travellers who have visited Mongolia concur in representing their faces as covered with a very tardy and scanty crop of hair. They admire, however, and envy this element of manly beauty; and, when chance bestows it upon any of their countrymen, look upon him with extreme veneration. A stranger, too, may be sure of respect in exact proportion to the length of his beard. Whiskers, which are more cominon, are less prized; whilst the hair over the forehead and temples, in obedience to the caprices of fashion, is shaved, the rest being braided into a tail which hangs down the back. Even the varieties of the toilette form curious subjects of study for the ethnologist. This simple method of disfiguring the countenance has succeeded another far more complicated but no less effectual, which has been described with greater minuteness than perspicuity by the old

travellers. We may gather, however, from their accounts, that the period of the greatest political splendour of the Mongols was coincident with their greatest elaborateness of dress; and that, like individuals, they have become more careless in proportion as they have sunk in the scale of fortune. It is well known, that after the task of conquering China had been accomplished by the Manchús, they nearly forfeited their new acquisition, by imposing their head-dress as well as their laws upon the vanquished. They insisted on the adoption of the fashion I have described. The empire was convulsed from one end to the other. A general insurrection was for a while expected, but the conquerors were firm; and the Chinese furnished the strongest possible testimony of their humiliation, by consenting to change their customs as well as their masters. It may be that it was the desire of the Manchús to prevent the repetition of the notorious influence exercised by the Chinese on the former Tatar invaders. A second attempt of a similar tendency was made in later times by the Emperor Kien Long, who caused 5000 Manchú words to be substituted for as many Chinese ones, forbidding the use of the latter under pain of corporal punishment!

The hair of the Mongols is black, and naturally by no means scanty or short. Among the neighbouring Tunguses instances have been met with of hair of extraordinary length. A Russian ambassador mentions a man whose locks measured four yards, and whose son promised in this respect to emulate his sire.

The complexion of the Mongols is sometimes described as dark-yellow, sometimes as deep olive. The truth seems to be, that it is rather sallow and tanned by the sun. The children are frequently mentioned as having ruddy cheeks: and the rosy countenances of the women are also dwelt upon.

The stature of the Tatars generally is moderate. Their legs are remarkable for their shortness; their feet also are small; and their knees are slightly bent out. Their thighs are thick, their shoulders broad, their waists small, their arms long and vigorous. The peculiarities of their lower limbs may result from their equestrian habits; the strength of their arms is very possibly derived from the constant use of the bow.

It is natural that a slight notice of the country inhabited by the Mongols should succeed the description of their physical organisation. Without believing in the theory of autochthoneity, I consider man to be in some measure the creature of the hills, valleys, lakes, rivers, winds, storms, and sunshine of his native land. All these participate in the formation of his character. It is in this sense alone that I understand that the Tatar race traces its origin to the Altai chain of mountains. There was the cradle of its future individuality. In the regions to which its various subdivisions migrated, new elements were added by degrees. Not the least remarkable instance is that of the Mongols.

Their present country occupies the sides and summit of a vast swell in the surface of Central Asia, broken up into hills and valleys, and intersected by a few large rivers and numerous small streams. It is crowned by the great desert of Kobi, or Shamo, as the Chinese call it, one of the wildest and bleakest regions of the globe, of still unknown extent and undefined limits, though parts have been more than once explored and described. In some places its surface is undulating, like that of the rolling prairies of America; in others it is rough, broken up by ravines, and gullies, whilst frequent plains are met with, covered with pasture. The hills are generally clothed in a mantle of dark *búdurgúna*, which resembles young oak-shoots, and are often inhabited by such prodigious numbers of mice, that the horses' feet sunk at every step into their burrows.

Among the ever-recurring features of a Mongolian landscape, are the salt-lakes, with their white incrustation, and elegant fringe of slender reeds. Many of these are met with in the vast sea of sand and flints which stretches north of the Tsakhars.

But we must not consider Mongolia under the most unfavourable aspect only. In many quarters it is highly fertile, especially near the Great Wall, where the climate has been compared to that of Germany. The banks of the Boro, the Shara, the Iro, and other large rivers in the northern section of the country, abound in pasture, and there occurs here and there land admirably adapted for tillage.

In one part of the desert of Kobi, there is an eminence, which, seen from a distance, appears like a forest. As you approach, however, an extraordinary *lusus naturæ* is observed. Here is beheld an immense altar; there a sarcophagus. Now is seen a lofty tower; then the ruins of a house with a stone-floor. The rock, a decomposed granite, lies in large masses, from three to nine inches thick; in some parts the *Robinia pygmæa* grows thick on the surface; no other plants are seen, and the soil around is sandy. The Mongols declare that much loadstone is found in this place; and if any one approaches with a gun, it is strongly attracted. In Mount Darkan is said to be preserved the anvil of Genghis Khân, composed of the peculiar metal called *buryn*, possessing the properties of iron and copper, being at once hard and flexible.

One of the peculiarities of a Mongolian landscape is, that almost every considerable eminence is surmounted by an obo or altar, consisting either of a heap of stones, a mound of earth or sand, or a construction of wood, generally of colossal dimensions. These altars are raised under the direction of a Lama, with many solemn ceremonies, and are constantly visited for the purpose of prayer, or the presentation of offering. Every passer by alights from his horse, places himself south of the obo, with his face to the north, makes several prostrations; and, having breathed his humble supplication, and deposited his gift, rides away, satisfied with the performance of his duty. Tufts of horse-hair are the most frequent offerings, the object of which is generally the preservation of the pastoral riches of the Nomades. Similar ceremonies, with a similar object, are performed by the Yakoutes, in the worship of the Spirit of the Woods.

The climate of Mongolia is generally cold, but in some places, and at certain times, the heat is excessive. Kiakhta itself is 2400 feet above the level of the sea, consequently, higher than all the towns of the Hartz and Swiss Alps; and there is a continual rise from this place to Urga.

It is well known, that Mongolia is politically divided into several principalities, each recognizing the sovereignty of the emperor of China. This is not the place to enter into any detail on the arrangements by which government is carried on.

I can only say, that they ensure the complete subjection of the Mongols; and that even the Chinese themselves now feel that their Great Wall is superfluous. Previous to the annexation of Mongolia, this stupendous fortification seemed always in a state of siege, so numerous were the soldiers that passed to and fro along it. It now winds its deserted line along the valleys, up the sides and over the crests of the mountains, like a railway started without sufficient capital to keep it open.

The Lamaic religion is one of the chief instruments for keeping the population in order. Its own natural influence is to render the people who profess it mild and gentle; but its ministers are, besides, under the complete control of the celestial emperor, who even directs the inspiration of the Kootooktoo, or Pope of Mongolia.

There is one point in the ancient civilisation of Mongolia, which may be worth noticing. Europe, towards the close of the middle ages, was filled with reports of vast cities in this part of the world, among the principal of which was Karakorum. But modern geographers deny that these cities had any real existence, at least, with the circumstances of grandeur which have been attributed to them. Malte Brun observes, that no ruins remain to attest the former splendour of Karakorum; and that "the Mongols have never been sufficiently numerous, or sufficiently rich, to build cities worthy of the name." But even in the desolate steppes of Kobi there occurs the fragments of former architectural magnificence. in one place they encumber the slope of a mountain for the space of two wersts. They are all of stone; the remains of temples, altars, and other buildings of colossal dimensions, present themselves on every side, covered with grass and moss; in some cases the foundations only are of granite, whilst the superstructure is brick. Clay, mixed with gravel, was used as mortar; the clay has now disappeared, and the gravel alone remains. Some of the buildings are round, and adorned with cornices; in the temples are empty vaulted niches, broken bits of a green stone strew the courts, and troughs of the same material also occur.

For a space of four wersts beyond the cluster I have described, similar remains are visible, though more thinly scat-

tered; and tombs, towers, and deserted walls appear on every side. There cannot be a doubt that on this spot a vast population once swarmed; for in all probability the most important structures have alone survived, those of a humbler character having been constructed of a more perishable material. "These ruins," says Timkowski, "formerly inhabited by a descendant of Genghis Khân, now serve as a retreat for the flocks; the Mongols seldom visit the monuments of their former splendour and independence."

I can hardly understand how, after this, M Bory de St Vincent could have asserted of the race, in which he includes the Mongols, that they have never attempted to build cities, "Nulle part ils n'ont bati des villes."

But I have not as yet alluded to all the authentic accounts of ruined cities in Mongolia. The Russian ambassador Isbrants Ides described no less than three in the seventeenth century, full of fragments of statues of kings sitting cross-legged (perhaps Budhist idols), and surrounded with an earthen rampart. These, it may be said, were not cities in our sense of the word. They were rather nuclei for population, consisting chiefly of public buildings; but I question whether the wooden habitations with which they were surrounded, were not at least as durable as the brick houses of London at the present moment; and whether any other traces will remain of this great metropolis three or four hundred years after its total desertion, than its churches, prisons, parliament-houses, and other public edifices.

However this may be, certain it is, that the Mongols have generally manifested a peculiar predilection for temporary habitations, tempted thereto by the nature of their steppes, and the occupations to which they are compelled to addict themselves, as well as by their own inclinations fostered by their mode of life. The skeleton of their tents is generally made of osier, the cross-pieces being tied together with small thongs. The rafters of the roof are long poles, which meet at the top, leaving a small opening for the smoke. The covering of this frame-work consists in summer of one, in winter of three, layers of felt, manufactured of wool and horse-hair, procured by cutting off the manes of the foals in their first year, and that of some of the horses every spring.

The real Mongol name of a tent is *gher*, though travellers generally use the Siberian terms *kibitka* and *yourt*. On entering the low and narrow door, which is always turned towards the south, you observe on the right hand, near the entrance, the place reserved for the women. Aged persons have carpets of felt, with patterns worked in them, to sit on. The rich import these luxuries from Persia or Turkestân. Opposite the entrance is a small table supporting copper idols and various utensils for the offerings. On the right hand of this stands a wooden bedstead covered with felt; to the left are trunks, boxes, &c., for clothes. All the Mongols sit cross-legged on the ground, so that chairs and couches are dispensed with. Their dwellings are mostly very small, though those of the rich are comparatively spacious; and in some instances several tents are joined together, so as to resemble the various apartments of one house. These *ghers*, as they themselves confess, are often inadequate to protect them from the cold, so that the little children are sometimes completely wrapped in furs and skins.

The dress of the Mongols generally is in summer a long robe made of nankeen (like their shirts and other under garments), or coloured silk and satin, generally dark blue. Their cloth cloaks are usually black or red, with yellow button-holes. A leathern girdle, fastened with silver or copper buckles, serves to hold a knife, flint, and steel. Their silk caps are round, and trimmed with black plush; three long red ribbons hang down behind as ornaments, and produce a very beautiful effect, as they wave and flutter in the wind. Their thick-soled boots are made of leather. In winter they are protected from the inclemencies of the season by long pelisses of sheep skin, and caps trimmed with the same material, or the fur of sables, foxes, or marmots.

The women dress in many respects like their husbands. The old travellers assert that they could see no difference. But at present, if there be not much distinction in form, the female costume is remarkable for its superior richness. The robes of the wealthy are often of the most beautiful blue satin, their caps of sable, their silken zones interwoven with silver, and studded with large carnelians. Even the saddles of their horses are covered with these precious stones. They divide

their hair into two tresses, which fall on the breast, and are adorned at the extremities with small pieces of silver, coral, pearls, and precious stones of different colours. Coral is much prized in Mongolia, and is very dear.

The Mongol bridles, saddle, and harness, are often ornamented with copper, rarely with silver. Bows and arrows, with a short sword, are the favourite arms of the country, as they have always been among pastoral nations. We may suppose that the custom which prevailed anciently in China, of hanging up a bow and arrow before the door of a house at the birth of a son, was a remnant of the nomadic habits of the people. Muskets and rifles are only used by hunters, who obtain their powder, shot, and balls, from China.

Milk forms the staple article of food in Mongolia, being used as a beverage in its original state, and afterwards eaten when transformed to butter and cheese. This light food may account for the activity, as well as the lack of muscular vigour of the people. A Cossack is more than a match for a Mongol; but the latter, even when arrived at the age of sixty, will ride, it is asserted, two hundred wersts in a day without being fatigued. In summer they drink a kind of brandy, which is extracted from milk. I may here remark, by the way, that smoking is extremely common. Meat is rarely eaten; and then mutton is preferred. No game is touched, except on pressing occasions, but the wild goat and the wild boar. Fish are protected by superstition. In extreme cases they will eat the flesh of camels, horses, and even of animals that have died of disease; in which, I suppose, they would be imitated by every European under similar circumstances, though our fastidiousness might perhaps lead us so form a different opinion of what constituted urgency. Water is rarely tasted, brick tea being the favourite drink. This, indeed, is almost invariably the contents of the cast-iron kettle which swings over the fire of dried dung; and any traveller who passes by, provided he be furnished with his own wooden cup, sometimes lined with silver, may enter and quench his thirst. This beverage, called *satouran*, is generally rendered palateable with milk, butter, and salt. A little flour fried in oil is sometimes added. What is usually denominated brick-tea consists of the dry, dirty, and damaged

leaves and stalks of tea thrown aside in the Chinese manufactories, pressed in moulds, and dried in ovens. The Chinese will never drink it themselves. But the Mongols, the Buriats, the Kalmucks, and the Siberians, use it to excess. The latter, indeed, are said to weaken their constitutions by this means.

The small, fat, buffaloes of Mongolia are generally black, and their tufted hair gives them an extraordinary appearance. The sheep, which furnish abundance of milk, and whose excellent meat is spoken of by Martini with the relish of a connoisseur, are white, with long black ears and very large tails, like those mentioned by Herodotus and Ælian. They belong to the second class enumerated by these writers, and are not those which, from the length of their tails, required a little carriage to prevent them from dragging on the earth,—the peculiarity consisting rather in extreme breadth. The Mongolian horses are small, but vigorous and spirited. Their head is remarkably short: their hoof narrow.

Were any accident to deprive this people of either of the three species of animals I have described, a great revolution would necessarily be effected in their mode of life, and considerable influence exerted on their habits and physical organisation. The gradual destruction of the rein-deer in Siberia, within these last two or three centuries, has brought many changes into the manners of that country, besides introducing the use of dogs; but the loss of the buffaloes, the sheep, or the horses, would be far more influential on the fortunes of the Mongols. That the contingency which I have supposed is by no means an improbable one, is shewn by the parallel case of the rein-deer in the country immediately to the north; and about twenty-five years ago, the whole steppe of Kobi was visited by such a mortality among the domestic animals, that some proprietors of five hundred horses had not above twenty left, and others who possessed two hundred, had saved only four. It seems, certainly, at first sight, by no means likely that the breed of horses should be destroyed in Mongolia. Still, admitting even the possibility of such an occurrence, we are at liberty to speculate on its consequences.

In Siberia, it has been observed that those tribes which have lost their rein-deer have sensibly deteriorated, and afford a striking contrast, by their humility and weakness of character, to the martial disposition and proud bearing of the more fortunate people. I have no doubt that the Yakoutes, before they were reduced by Russia, and had begun to employ dogs instead of rein-deer, offered far more points of resemblance with the Tchuktchis than at present. A similar result would perhaps arrive, were any portion of the Mongol race deprived of its horses, its buffaloes, or its sheep. But, in addition, some of the most striking of their physical characteristics might become gradually obliterated.

To convince ourselves of this, we have but to reflect on the extent of the influence exerted by their peculiar mode of life on the Mongols, and on the determining causes of this mode of life. In the first place, their nomadic habits, and all the modifications of their character and structure resulting therefrom, are attributable to the necessity they are under of seeking support for their herds and their flocks. Their wandering life, to which Lucian compares that of a gourmand continually passing from one part of a table to another in search of a variety of good things, is especially inimical to steady industry, and must induce a certain tendency to vacillation and inconstancy, combined with general indolence and momentary displays of energy. One of the wisest of ancient writers asserts this character to be distinctive of a nomadic people. Should the Mongols ever be induced, by the accident I have supposed, or any other reason, to settle in their fertile valleys and plains, the natural result would be, the disappearance of this quality—this restlessness, I mean, and love of change, and unsteadiness, and proneness to indulge in speculative migrations, as well as aptitude to grow disgusted with late acquisitions,—from which most of the splendid achievements, and most of the misfortunes, of the race have proceeded. That there is arable land in Mongolia sufficient to support an agricultural population of two millions (the estimated number of the present inhabitants), I have no doubt.

I have already made some observations on the milk-diet of

the Mongols; but there are a few facts which I have purposely withheld for this place. Even so far back as the time of Homer, the habits of the Scythians or Tatars were so well known, that they won for them the appellation of Milk-Drinkers; and all nomadic nations have exhibited the same propensity. It is curious to remark, that Coxe, in describing the wandering shepherds of the Alps, asserts that they live on cheese, curds, and whey. The Mongols, as we have seen, like the ancient Æthiopians, indulge occasionally in meat; but milk, and the substances extracted from it, still form their staple articles of food. Mares' milk is generally preferred,—not, as was believed in the last century, because the cows will not suffer themselves to be milked, but because, on turning sour, it acquires a slightly inebriating quality. When in this state, Pallas informs us, it is called *koumiss*—the *kosmos* of Rubruquis, the *kemuls* of Marco Polo, and suggests Coray, the *oxygala* of Strabo. It is from this *koumiss* that the brandy I have already mentioned is manufactured. In winter, says Witzen, when the mares are less lactiferous, a beverage composed of snow water, honey, and millet, is substituted. It is obvious that the constant use of food so peculiar, for a long succession of ages, must have strikingly influenced the physical character of the Mongols; and that the substitution of a vegetable diet, which would be consequent on an alteration in their mode of life, would work considerable changes in them.

But on the nomadic mode of life depends, also, the constant use of horse-exercise, which I conceive to be one of the principal causes of some of the characteristics of the Mongols. Coray, in his learned notes on Hippocrates, enlarges on the diseases to which equestrian nations are peculiarly liable. On this theme I am not competent to enter; but it is easy to understand how, in this way, their moral character may be affected. Not, however, to lengthen out this speculation, some of the distinguishing characteristics of the Mongols,—I mean the shortness and outward curvature of their legs, and the smallness of their feet,—would, I think, entirely disappear as soon as their present mode of life should be changed.